

Blyth Town Deal Board Meeting

Thursday 07 December 2023 13.30

(Microsoft Teams video conference)

Member Name	Organisation	07/12/2023
Alan Ferguson (AF) - CHAIR	Fergusons Transport	Attended
Thom Bradley (TB)	Blyth Community Network	Attended
Scott Bullock (SB)	Newcastle College	<i>Apologies</i>
Angela Cosimini (AC)	Frameworks	
Claire Duggan (CD)	Jobcentre Plus	Debbie Draper
Robin Earl (RE)	Advance Northumberland	Attended
Ian Flintoff (IF)	Blyth Churches Together	
Greg Gavin (GG)	Blyth Town Forum	
Helen Golightly (HG)	North East LEP	
Rob Hamilton (RH)	North of Tyne Combined Authority	<i>Apologies</i>
John Hildreth (JH)	Advance Northumberland	Attended
Martin Lawlor (ML)	Port of Blyth	Attended
Ian Levy (IL)	Member of Parliament for Blyth Valley Constituency	
Matthew Murray (MM)	Tharsus	Attended
Cllr Kath Nisbet (KN)	Northumberland County Council	
Wojciech Ploszaj (WP)	Northumberland County Council	Attended
Tony Quinn (TQ)	ORE - Catapult	Attended
Jane Robinson (JR)	Newcastle University	<i>Apologies</i>
Glen Sanderson (GS)	Northumberland County Council	
Julie Simpson (JS)	Jobcentre Plus	
Wendy Scott (WS)	Cultural Advisory Group	
Rob Strettle (RS)	Energising Blyth Programme Team	Attended
Warren Taylor (WT)	Blyth Town Council	Attended
Andrew Thelwell (AT)	Bede Academy	Attended
Mark Warnes (MW)	Active Northumberland	<i>Apologies</i>
Richard Wearmouth (RW)	Northumberland County Council	Attended

In Attendance	Organisation	07/12/2023
James Armstrong (JA)	Senior Programme Officer (Regeneration), NCC	Attended
Lara Baker (LB)	Programme Manager, NCC	Attended
Dan Ellis (DE)	Jam Jar Cinema	Attended
Bev Harrison, (BH)	Regeneration Finance & Performance Manager, NCC	Attended
Jenny Hindmarsh (JH)	Senior Programme Officer (Regeneration), NCC	Attended
Carol Jameson (CJ)	Regeneration Programmes Investment Manager, NCC	Attended



Alex Jarvis (AJ)	Business & Trade	
Elaine Maylin (EM)	Regeneration Investment Funding Manager, NCC	
Lee Paris (LP)	Project Manager, NCC	Attended
Taylor Sharp (TS)	Business & Trade	Attended
Helen Swinburn (HS)	Projects Officer, NCC	<i>Apologies</i>
Jan Willis (JW)	Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), NCC	

Notes of discussion:

1	Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence AF welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies and attendance are noted in the list above.	Action:
2	Declarations of Interest RE – no change in the projects already declared by Advance Northumberland RS – no change in the projects already declared by NCC ML – no change in the projects already declared by The Port AT – ECLH for Bede Academy Agenda item 5 - Culture and Placemaking Programme proposed FBC changes for approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dan Ellis, representing Jam Jar Cinema, in attendance to support the Culture and Placemaking Programme presentation as the appointed operator of the new Culture Venue. 	
3	The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.	
4	Programme & Project Update for information Presentation given by RS, LB, LP. Slide pack to be shared. ML – it's great to see the move from planning to delivery, well done everyone. The ECLH that is opening in September 24 should generate a lot of footfall, have any thoughts been given to a low-cost walking route from there along the quayside to the town centre, i.e.; footprints, signage, etc? RS – the CPP project will help with some of that but it is mainly focused on the town centre. We can consider if there is anything we can do now or within the longer-term plan for towns once the guidance is out. The Culture Map currently in the town is low cost and we could look at something similar with partners involved in that potentially expanding to cover other	HS



	<p>assets on the quayside. RS also mentioned other low-cost examples such as temporary route stickers that can be seen on Newcastle Quayside which can provide fun elements of wayfinding. LB – we will be coming back to Board in the new year with a thorough evaluation of the connectivity projects and we are already thinking about Bridge St internally to consider ways to extend improvements to the quayside as once you are on the quayside that is the most obvious route to connect the ECLH to the town centre. We just need to think about how we can deliver it in the current programme of works. Signage and links are critical and it is critical to have a link from the town centre to the quayside. AF – it is right to look at the continuation from Bridge St. LB – if we do have a viable scheme support and promotion from Board will be vital as this would require a project adjustment request to DLUHC. RS – an art led route to get movement through the town could also be a possibility.</p> <p>WT – Culture Hub, when we originally looked at the design part of the space was for a creative play area for younger children, but I think that has changed recently so what will it be now? LB – that space hasn't changed but is being procured separately to main operator. The intent is that this will be non-commercial at the outset as we want it to be available to as many people as possible. We haven't finalised the development ideas or procurement brief yet but hope to be out to tender in the first quarter of 2024 where we'd like to see various pilots of creative play and activities across all age groups to see which would be more popular and have the most beneficial impact.</p>	
5	<p>Culture and Placemaking Programme proposed FBC changes for approval RS presented slides to Board.</p> <p>LB – you will appreciate that we already have an approved Full Business Case but some changes have come about from evaluating what is best for the town, what is achievable and what is deliverable. The implications require a Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC which requires sanction from Board. For note, there is a significant reduction in the visitor numbers as they are not achievable and as Rob outlined we feel the alternative approach to a more diverse range of smaller events will be more beneficial for the town centre over a more sustained period. We have spoken to New Skills (Business Case consultants) and they will run the new economic case and are confident we can still achieve the BCR figures DHCLU will be looking for. AF – do we need to approve the changes today? LB – yes as we need sanction from Board to move forward. AF – more events over a period of time seems sensible and it will reduce the travel and car parking need which may have been a problem, plus a spread of events may provide a more economic balance.</p> <p>TQ – regarding the BCR and visitor number reduction, is it the same or different? LB – it's the same. We need to achieve a minimum 'BCR' to secure Town Deal funding but most of the projects are significantly higher. We had a healthy Economic Case and BCR but the reduction in forecast visitor numbers will have an impact on these calculations. However, as part of the new proposal we have rehearsed it with New Skills and we are confident with the narrative we can achieve a healthy BCR and achieve / exceed the minimum. it's just not as high as it was.</p>	



	<p>TQ – it's good that it's being tested with New Skills but what about DLUHC? LB - TS has been involved in the discussions and we have a meeting with her tomorrow to go through it in detail. The risk of losing funding is very low and I think it is a much better scheme now. TQ – it is positive to liaise with DHCLU and sustaining the events over a longer period seems a sensible longer term plan.</p> <p>DE – I am working closely with WS and Maddie Maughan to draw up plans and we have done an audit on the existing provision so we can bolt on to events that are already being delivered and what we are proposing is adding value. There is a risk both reputational and cost to NCC for much larger event, Loose Fest for example in Newcastle was cancelled due to the weather at huge costs and loss, so a spread of events is better. We want to boost CPP so we see a long-term cultural change and see people wanting to visit Blyth so the visitor numbers are realistic and support from Board on the changes are welcomed.</p> <p>RS – in the Long-Term Plan for Towns there will be other events in future, i.e.: an idea that has emerged is for an Energy Festival celebrating renewable energies, the Port/quayside, Tall Ships, Energy Central Campus, visitor centre, etc. RS cited the Town Council's work in Blyth this year with regards to the 'Christmas in Blyth' campaign as a good example of taking this approach of spreading the volume of activity and as well as advertising their own events they are advertising and other activities too as an overall campaign to boost footfall, spend and visitors to the town centre.</p> <p>RS – we are asking Board for support and agreement to approach the funder to make a project change request. Board agreed to support.</p>	
6	Monitoring and Evaluation for approval	
6a	<p>Monitoring & Evaluation Plan (including Evaluation Options Paper) LP presented slides to Board.</p> <p>Board were asked to consider the options presented and agree the proposed option for an independent evaluation of the Energising Blyth Programme, option 3. Board agreed to option 3.</p> <p>AF – it is helpful for Board to have independent information as it reassures us that what we have been doing is right.</p> <p>LB – we do have a budget agreed as part of the establishment of the programme at Cabinet so NCC will be paying for the evaluation.</p>	
6b	<p>TD December 23 Monitoring Return LB – we are required to submit 6-month monitoring returns for both FHSF and Town Deal. FHSF was submitted on 17 November and Town Deal was submitted on 04 December but still needs to be sanctioned by the Board. There are three elements for sanction by Board - Project progress, the funding position and risk. LB presented slides to Board.</p>	



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|    | AF confirmed he had discussed the return with LB and signed it. <b>Board gave their formal approval on the Town Deal return that was submitted on 04 December 2023.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |       |
| 7  | <b>Strategic Sites Update</b><br>Covered in slide pack.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |       |
| 8  | <b>Levelling Up Deep Dive Update</b><br>Covered in slide pack.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |
| 9  | <b>Long Term Plan for Towns Update</b><br>Covered in slide pack.<br><br>WT – the Town Task Force, is that an internal or external body? RS – it is Government led and we are waiting on guidance on their role but alongside the funding announcement they did talk about freedoms and flexibilities from Government to help high streets to thrive so I expect the Task Force will provide support to us on that, possibly similar to ARUP's role previously on Town Deal to check and challenge and provide thematic and programme development advice and support. |       |
| 10 | <b>Communications and Engagement</b><br>Covered in slide pack.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |
| 11 | <b>Forward Plan and Calendar</b><br>To be circulated with the slide packs as there was not enough time left in the meeting to discuss this.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LB/HS |
| 12 | <b>Any Other Business</b><br>None reported.<br><br>AF - thanked everyone for their input and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |       |
| 13 | <b>Date and time of next meeting</b><br>To be confirmed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |



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